When I was a boy, I used to think, if I were Jesus, I wouldn't change stones into bread, I'd change them into bags of Doritos! Right now, The people of Ukraine consider their beloved country to be "enemy occupied territory." As we watch the news, I encourage us not just to watch the news, but to PRAY THE NEWS... to pray for those we see on the news who are suffering. But did you know that we ALSO live in "enemy occupied territory", spiritually speaking? The Devil is currently and TEMPORARILY the WRONGFUL ruler of this world, as we just heard in today's Gospel- the devil shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world and says, "I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me..."

CS Lewis says that Christianity is the story of how the RIGHTFUL KING has landed in "enemy occupied territory". That RIGHTFUL KING WANTS HIS WORLD BACK! He is calling EACH of us to participate with Him in a great mission of sabotaging the enemy. Sabotage can be defined as the attempt to destroy or hinder a cause or a plan.

Until the RIGHTFUL KING returns again at the end of time, His mission isn't complete. His mission is still underway. CS Lewis also says "When you go to church you are really listening--in to the secret wireless from our friends: that is why the enemy is so anxious to prevent us from going." So at Mass, the RIGHTFUL KING feeds us with His Word and with the Eucharist, and then sends us out ON MISSION at the end of Mass. We leave Mass to sabotage the enemy by our evangelization, and by our prayer, fasting, and giving.

In the desert, the devil attacks Jesus with three kinds of temptation. He's trying to sabotage Him. But Jesus sabotages the devil, <u>number</u> 1: by remembering Scripture, and, <u>number</u> 2: by prayer and fasting.

As we spend 40 days in the desert, the devil will attack EACH of us, with the SAME three kinds of temptation. The question is, Will <u>you and I</u> let the devil sabotage us, or will we sabotage the devil, like Jesus did, by 1: remembering Scripture, and, 2: by prayer, fasting, and also giving?

We can expect the same three temptations that Jesus faced. They are, as St. John the Evangelist teaches, the "pride of life", the "Lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes."

The "Pride of life" is sinful or selfish pride. It's different from good pride, which is, for example, pride in a job well done.

The "Lust of the flesh" refers to our physical appetites, for food, for intimacy, for comfort, etc.

The "Lust of the eyes" refers to greed.

Let's look at how Adam and Eve gave in to the devil's temptations. First, it says Eve looked at the forbidden fruit and saw that it "was good for food... a delight to the eyes." So, here we have the "lust of the flesh", and the "lust of the eyes." The devil told her the fruit would make her wise and like God, tempting her to selfish pride.

In the desert, Jesus is tempted in the same three ways, BUT instead of being sabotaged like Adam and Eve, HE sabotages the devil, by remembering Scripture and by prayer and fasting.

First, Satan tempts him in the area of lust of the flesh: "Turn these stones to bread." When I was a kid, I used to think, If I were Jesus, I would turn stones into bags of Doritos every day!

Then, lust of the eyes: the devil shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world that he is the ruler of, and offers them to Jesus, if He will worship him.

Then, pride: the devil takes Jesus to the top of the Temple, and tells him to jump off, to perform a miraculous "stunt" in front of everyone, to become famous.

During Lent, and ALL YEAR LONG, Jesus gives us POWERFUL weapons against these three temptations: **Scripture, Sacraments, prayer, fasting, and giving.**

Prayer... fights pride. It strengthens the virtue of humility. It strengthens our ability to trust in God.

Fasting... fights the lust of the flesh. It strengthens the virtue of self-control, our ability to control our physical appetites.

Giving... fights the lust of the eyes. It strengthens the virtue of generosity, the ability to share our time, talent, and treasure.

Finally, in case any of us doubt the existence of the devil, I'd like to share about a FAITH BUILDING book I recently finished. It's called "Diary of an American Exorcist" by Fr. Stephen Rosetti. Note: I wouldn't recommend this book for children. Fr. Rosetti has been an exorcist for years, and in his book he talks about many of the exorcisms he has done, and what he has learned. He shares how his encounters with evil spirits have greatly strengthened his faith in TRUTHS of our Faith, such as that the Catholic Church is the True Church and has authority over evil spirits, that the sacraments really do bring the presence of Jesus, that Jesus is infinitely more powerful than the devil, that God has given Mary and the saints power to cast out evil spirits, and other truths of our Faith.

For example, Fr. Rosetti writes, quote, "The Communion of Saints? We regularly experience the power of the saints and their direct assistance... The importance of the sacraments? The first stop in the healing process is going to Confession. Moreover, the

possessed person often has great problems going to Mass, receiving the Eucharist, or praying in Eucharistic adoration: The demons hate it! Their strong aversion to the Eucharist is a testament to the Real Presence of Christ...” And one final quote, Fr. Rosetti writes, “When they are finally liberated, the formerly possessed are often in the first pews of the Church. They know the truth. They know how evil Satan is. They know that God cares and has freed them.” WOW...

Lord Jesus, this Lent, help us to participate with you in sabotaging the devil’s kingdom, in spreading YOUR Kingdom, by our evangelization, and by scripture, sacraments, prayer, fasting, and giving. Thy Kingdom Come! Amen!

*Christ's Mission Appeal $35k

* RELIEF FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE - Right now, The people of Ukraine consider their beloved country to be “enemy occupied territory.” How can we help them? Prayer, Fasting, and Giving. We can pray for them: I encourage us to offer Rosaries, asking Our Lady of Kiev to pray for Ukraine. We can fast for them, by offering up small sacrifices, small aches and pains, for Ukraine. And Giving: we can give to charities that provide relief to the suffering people of Ukraine.
Next weekend our bishop is encouraging us to have a special emergency collection for Ukraine. Currently there are already more than 2.9 million people in need of assistance. There is great risk of additional suffering both within Ukraine and for those who may flee to neighboring countries for safety. Catholic Relief Services and their partners are in need of immediate support to meet both ongoing needs. We will have an emergency special collection be taken for Ukraine next weekend. Please write checks to the Diocese of Saginaw with Ukraine written in the memo. The funds will be sent to the CRS and its partners already in Ukraine and bordering countries, ready to provide safe shelter, hot meals, hygiene supplies, fuel to keep warm, transport to safe areas, counseling support and more. For more information or questions, you may contact Maria Coss at 989-797-6646 or mcoss@dioceseofsaginaw.org.

*4PM Saturday Mass will be year round, see bulletin for how this decision was made

*On behalf of our secretary Sandy Peplinski and her family, thank you to all who have donated to her medical fund, or who have prayed for her. Please continue to pray for her and her family at this time. Thank you. “Our Lady, Health of the Sick, pray for Sandy”